DOES APD NOW STAND FOR ANOTHER PERSON DEAD? | RIP, ROCKDAMULLET | THE LEGEND OF SID SOFFER

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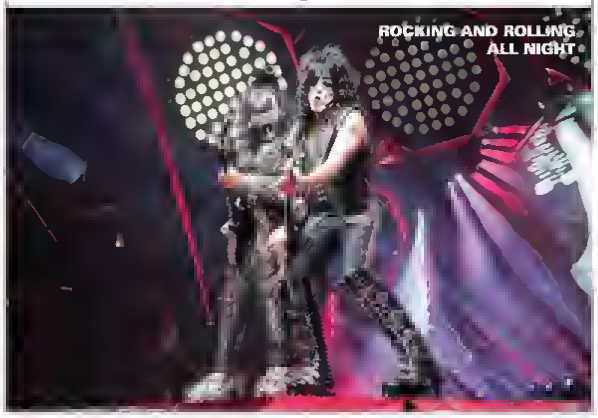

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ORANGE FEATHERS »

FELIPE FLORES

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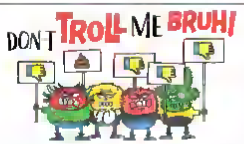

"You're so full of shit. I have worked closely with the congressman and his family. He is as honest as they come, and Rhonda, while, yes, is his wife, worked 18-hour days seven days a week for his campaign; there is no suspicious or wrongdoing here. Leave your partisan, divisive and bullshit comments where they belong—in the toilet."

—mlt, commenting on R. Scott Moxley's Feb. 18 post, "To the End, Representative Dana Rohrabacher diverted campaign funds to family accounts"

We respond: Didn't she get convicted of electoral fraud for that?

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APD: Another Person Dead

A federal lawsuit claims Anaheim policemen beat a bipolar man to death

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Mike Perkins stepped up to a podium outside the Madison Park apartments in Anaheim on Feb. 18 to recount haunting memories from a morning he wished never happened. During a press conference announcing a wrongful-death federal lawsuit against Anaheim police in the killing of Justin Perkins last October, Mike recalled a commotion that roused him from sleep. "I was laying there in bed, and that's when I'm hearing, 'No, it wasn't me!'" he says of his nephew's cries. "I looked out the front door, and that's when I saw the beating was happening."

On that morning, Mike ran toward his nephew to protect him, not knowing it was Anaheim police officers who were wrestling with him on the ground. He got within a few feet when one cop allegedly told him to keep his distance. "I see badges, I see guns," Mike said. "I'm taught not to attack the police." What he did do was tell them his nephew suffered from a mental illness and to stop hitting him. "He's got the mindset of a 12-year-old, but they didn't want to hear it," he added. "I say this now: They need to be retrained."

Mike threw his weathered Lakers cap to the ground in frustration after recounting ending all life support for Perkins just two days after his 38th birthday.

John Burris and DeWitt Lacy, attorneys for Perkins' mother, Teresa, supported their key witness during his tormented testimony before the press. On Feb. 15, they had finalized and filed the suit in court, alleging that officers Shiao Wang and Kenny Lee beat and choked Perkins, who suffered from bipolar disorder, to death. The complaint outlines a number of alleged civil-rights violations, including wrongful death, excessive force and denial of medical care. Burris, an Oakland-based attorney, notably once represented the late Rodney King in a civil trial, winning a $3.8 million judgement against the Los Angeles Police Department.

"There is no indication that he was involved in any kind of horrendous, illegal activity that justified the level of force employed and directed against him," Burris said of Perkins. "My office has taken up his cause. He had a right to live. He had a right to a full enjoyment of life."

On Oct. 27, Anaheim police arrived at the complex where Perkins lived around 8:40 a.m. following a call of a reported assault. According to the complaint, Wang and Lee confronted Perkins at the apartment he shared with his uncle. Mike is noted as having heard his nephew deny assaulting anyone earlier that morning, but the cops' attempt to arrest him turned rough—fast.

MIKE PERKINS RECOUNTS HIS NEPHEW'S DEATH

GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

"Wang and Lee repeatedly and brutally struck [Perkins] about his head, face and body with closed fists," reads the complaint. "Wang and Lee continued their assault on ... Perkins with several baton strikes to his head and body. One of the defendant officers dropped his baton and began to choke ... Perkins with an unapproved chokehold."

Witness accounts claim he didn't strike back at the officers at any time and only struggled to free himself from the chokehold. "He's not trying to hurt you!" Mike reportedly said during the altercation. "He's just scared, he has a mental disorder!"

The complaint frames the aftermath of the arrest in jarring terms. Perkins' body is said to have gone limp. After being handcuffed, officers tried to stand him up, only Perkins looked "dazed" and couldn't walk without assistance. A few steps in, Perkins collapsed and appeared to be unconscious. It's further alleged that 45 minutes passed between the incident and Perkins receiving medical attention at West Anaheim Medical Center, where he spent days in a coma. "As a result of the officers' unconstitutionally abusive and negligent conduct, Perkins was pronounced dead on Oct. 31, 2018," the complaint reads.

Wang, Lee, the city of Anaheim and the Anaheim Police Department are named as defendants. The city has 21 days to respond to the complaint, but an Anaheim spokesman says that while they're aware of the suit, they hadn't received a copy by the time of the press conference. "Our officers responded to a call for help for someone being assaulted and acted in their duty as peace officers," spokesman Mike Lyster adds. "They sustained serious injuries and have yet to be cleared to return to work. Beyond that, we want to respect all involved by letting reviews of the incident and any legal process play out."

Initial reports by Anaheim police in October stated two officers were "seriously injured" in attempting to arrest Perkins, described as an assault-and-battery suspect. They had to be taken to a local trauma center. According to Mike Perkins' recollection of that morning, a cop complained about having been bitten during the struggle, but the nature of the injuries are exempt from disclosure, as the *Weekly* learned when first asking about the case in November.

Police activated body-worn cameras at the time of the incident, footage that may become crucial evidence in a criminal probe and civil litigation. As of press time, attorneys have asked for the videos, but their requests have been denied. Citing ongoing investigations, Lyster deemed any public release of the footage to be "premature" at this time.

In the meantime, the Orange County district attorney's office (OCDA) continues its probe into whether officers acted lawfully or criminally in the in-custody death of Perkins. The investigation joins similar cases in Anaheim during the past year. In March 2018, Christopher Eisinger, a homeless man, was pulled off life support following an altercation with police. The OCDA released body-camera footage of the incident in December after declining to press charges against the officers. The Eisinger family has also filed a lawsuit. In June, Ian Elliott Tompko, another homeless man reported to have been acting erratically, died after officers attempted to arrest him.

Family members fondly remember Perkins as a young man interested in theater who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder during his early years at Cypress College. After the press conference, nearly two dozen supporters set off for a "Justice for Justin" march to the Anaheim Police Department. Before joining the trek, Teresa shared memories of her last night out for dinner with her son.

"We had a nice time," she recalled. "[I dropped] him off at the safest place I could think of at 9 o'clock at night; by 9 o'clock the next morning, he was dead."

GSANROMAN@OCWEEKLY.COM

a clockwork orange»

Hempcrete Jungle

» MATT COKER

In Dana Rohrabacher's first tweet since Nov 4—when he thanked President Donald Trump for supporting the then-30-year-House incumbent and opposing eventual 48th Congressional District winner Harley Rouda—the ex-Surfin' Congressman calls for a border wall made from hemp

"Kudos to @StephenBannon @erikprince @realDonaldTrump A HEMP-BASED CONCRETE BORDER WALL [is] a win for USA security & taxpayers, farmers, veterans & environmentalists. Bold thinking! It's affordable & will work," Rohrabacher tweeted on Feb 7

FELIPE FLORES

Erik Prince the former Navy SEAL brother of Trump's Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, interned in Rohrabacher's Capitol Hill office in 1990 and, by the end of that decade, founded the controversial Blackwater security firm Prince held a Rohrabacher campaign fundraiser last year in his Virginia home, and both men have popped up in Robert Mueller's special counsel investigation

Below Rohrabacher's tweet was a link to BudTrader.com CEO Brad McLaughlin's Oct. 1 Facebook post with the plea, "Use Industrial Hemp Materials to Build a U.S./Mexico Border Wall Funded by The Cannabis Industry/Federal Cannabis Tax." In a bit of logrolling (joint rolling?) and apparently unaware of Rohrabacher's current job status BudTrader.com issued a press release Feb 7 that begins, "In a tweet posted today from his official Twitter account, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher urged President Trump to read and consider a plan created by the cannabis community for a southern border wall constructed from a hemp-based material known as hemp concrete."

Encinitas-based BudTrader.com, which is billed as "the largest cannabis social-media platform in the world" with 2 million registered "cannabis enthusiasts," cites a Politico story on Stephen Bannon, Prince and key Republican operatives seeking private funding for a Hempcrete wall. "According to Congressman Rohrabacher, he spoke to Steve Bannon, and he is going to read the hemp wall white paper [an authoritative report] that BudTrader and the cannabis/hemp community wrote," says McLaughlin in the press release

The BudTrader CEO notes he originally proposed a hemp wall to Rohrabacher in April 2018 and submitted his white paper to the congressman this past September

However worthy the proposal may ring in your ears, Rohrabacher's Twitter followers had fun with the ex-congressman's support of it, including Wes Harman who simply writes, "RUSSIAN EMPLOYEE SAYS WHAT?!"

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Ode to Feces

Please stop letting your dogs shit in the grass 2 inches from my front door. Almost every morning, I wake up to one, two or three piles of poo in my grass. I know that there is a sidewalk next to my grass, and you walk your dogs there—but you KNOW your dogs are going to shit, so bring a bag and clean it up!

And it's not just that: Just after Christmas, my 9-year-old daughter was wearing the brand-new pair of pink suede Vans I had bought her for the first time. It was still dark out when she accidentally stepped in the huge pile of dog turd, and as she burst into tears and proclaimed them ruined. I tried to reassure her I could fix them. Except I can't. There is a brown shit stain on her shoes that will not come off. I am a single mom, and I go to school, and $50 for a pair of shoes is a lot for me. Thanks for ruining a present that she barely even got to wear ONCE because you're an asshole!

BOB ALL

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey You!" c/o *OC Weekly* 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

OC WEEKLY

TACO ISSUE

PUBLISHES FEBRUARY 28

FRIDA at 5

THE CINEMA CELEBRATES
FIVE YEARS AS DOWNTOWN
SANTA ANA'S CULTURAL ANCHOR

BY MATT COKER

Ryan Chase's family roots in downtown Santa Ana (DTSA) date back to 1919, when his great-grandfather opened a shoe store on Fourth Street. A third-generation principal at S&A Management and president of the Downtown Inc business-improvement district, Chase, with the support of a family that is the largest private-property owner in Santa Ana, made reinventing DTSA his "pet project" half a dozen years ago

Part of that involved changing the name of Fiesta Marketplace to East End, where new tenants were encouraged to open shops, markets, brewpubs, trendy restaurants such as Playground and yet another reincarnation of the Yost Theater, which had been among a cluster of movie theaters concentrated in and around DTSA.

A short walk from the Yost was the Fiesta Twin movie theater, which opened in 1988 and had a program of mostly mainstream Hollywood films with Spanish subtitles. That made perfect business sense because, by 2001, Census Bureau estimates showed Santa Ana had the highest concentration of Spanish-speaking residents in the nation.

However, when Chase was setting the East End reinvention in motion, he took a hard look at the two-screen Fiesta Twin's operator, Los Angeles-based Metropolitan Theaters, which at its peak had 68 screens in multiple states that predominantly featured movies for Spanish speakers. The chain was down to only two venues, including Fiesta Twin, where the short-term lease was up "Frankly, their concept was not working anymore for a variety of reasons," Chase says, mentioning one· Most immigrants had assimilated to the point that they patronized theaters with English-language movies more than those presented, dubbed or subtitled in Spanish.

"We were looking at what the options were, and at the same time, this idea of alternative movie venues came across our thoughts," Chase recalls. "I have traveled to downtowns all over world and looked at what drives them. Independent film is definitely a piece of the puzzle."

Theaters such as the Regal's University Town Center in Irvine and Regency's South Coast Village in southern Santa Ana would (and still do) include indie and foreign titles in their lineups, but "Orange County was lacking a true arthouse," Chase says. "We felt if we could find someone who could bring one here, it would be good for the culture of Orange County, the film industry in Orange County, and a good driver for the area, a good anchor."

That someone turned out to be Logan Crow, the executive director of what is now the Frida Cinema, which on Thursday, Feb 21 celebrates its fifth anniversary

Crow was viewed as an outsider when he arrived to helm the Frida Cinema, but he was born at Fountain Valley Community Hospital to parents from Central (Nicaragua) and South America (Ecuador) He spent most of his childhood and teen years in the Gardena, Torrance and Redondo Beach areas, where he credits the Bijou Theatre in Hermosa Beach with being his "home away from home starting at a very early age."

While Crow did go to Mann's Torrance or General Cinema in Redondo Beach for mainstream films such as *Back to the Future* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, it was the two-screen Bijou that really shaped him, showing fare such as *Diva*, *Eraserhead* and *Cinema Paradiso* "I was 10 when I saw *Blue Velvet*," he says of David Lynch's twisted fever dream. "There was a dark whimsy about it. It was unlike anything I had ever seen."

He's now a lifetime devotee of darker films best enjoyed in the dark. Nearly as much as viewing, he loved sharing titles with friends, just as his big sister Giselle had done (and still does) with him. Of course, it never occurred to him that such an affinity could lead to a job, even once he was grown up, living in Silverlake and volunteering at American Cinematheque, the nonprofit alternative-screening organization that presents films at the Egyptian in Hollywood and the Aero in Santa Monica.

As a volunteer, Crow learned the ropes of running an arthouse and plugged himself into national organizations dedicated to their survival. "I realized you can make a living doing this," he says, bringing up something he now drives home to student groups he is asked to speak to· "If I had not volunteered, I never would have made that connection."

But volunteering was not paying his bills, and wanting to attend film school, he enrolled at Long Beach City College to dispense with the general-education requirements. Using the connections of his father, who was in the real-estate business, Crow also started working as a part-time mortgage-loan broker "I did that for eight years," he says, "but I was very frustrated because there was nothing creative about it."

In his spare time, he parlayed his love for indie films into the MySpace page Mondo Celluloid, which featured listings for Los Angeles-area arthouses and later branched out to include movie reviews and interviews He built up such a following that Mondo Celluloid began booking midnight movies around LA County, including at what was then the just-reopened Art Theatre in Long Beach.

Mondo Midnights were first held monthly, then weekly because of their popularity Crow then started hearing from older people who wanted to attend his showings but could not swing the midnight start times They asked if Mondo Celluloid would entertain earlier screenings, but Crow could not afford the higher booking fees of the time slots before midnight. But that got him thinking about a membership organization like American Cinematheque

In 2009, the nonprofit Long Beach Cinematheque was born (and Crow is now celebrating the 10th anniversary of that outfit) The Long Beach nonprofit began presenting earlier shows at Art Theatre, and grant funding led to the acquisition of projection equipment for outdoor screenings all over town. A May 2009 showing of *Night of the Living Dead* was paired with Long Beach's first Zombie Walk. By 2011, the Zombie Walk occupied an entire city block and drew 3,000 people to devour food, music and cult-classic movies "It was fun," Crow says, "and exhausting."

Great ideas to further expand Long Beach Cinematheque kept coming to Crow, but he realized they could not come to fruition without a venue of their own. "I heard the term 'spinning your wheels' a lot," he says. It's expensive enough for a nonprofit to rent an existing old movie theater, especially with them disappearing because of the hundreds of thousands of dollars needed to invest in digital-projection systems required for current films. As this struggle was playing out for Crow, an email arrived from a stranger named Ryan Chase.

When the Zombie Walk was really humming, Crow wanted to investigate serving hard liquor, but he had no idea how to go about getting the proper permitting. By then, he was living in Santa Ana, where he was put in touch with Jeff Hall, the co-owner of DTSA restaurants C4 Deli: The Cure for the Common and Chapter One: the modern local. "We didn't move forward with the liquor idea, but Jeff and I loosely stayed in touch," Crow says.

Over in Santa Ana, the theaters at MainPlace Mall started presenting second-run films because massive cineplexes such as the AMC in nearby Orange locked in ever-expanding lineups of first-run pictures for its 30 screens A recast Fiesta Twin would have to somehow carve out a different niche than those, so Chase needed ideas. He asked among the DTSA brain trust if anyone knew someone with movie-theater expertise, and Hall told him about "a guy in Long Beach who was, for whatever reason, very limited because he could only present cinema in off-hours but was doing some very cool stuff."

Chase confides he immediately thought Crow might slide in and "take over" Fiesta Twin, but the landlord wanted to vet the newcomer because it would be "a big step for Logan" and "running a full-fledged theater was not a full-time thing for him."

Crow needed to see what he was dealing with, so he arranged to meet Hall outside the Fiesta Twin. An enthusiastic attendee of DTSA's monthly art walks, Crow thought the movie house in question was the old Princess Theatre, which is about a half block away and now a church. Once he arrived at the actual meeting place, walked inside and looked around, he immediately saw the potential.

"Remember the movie *Bugsy*?" he asks. "It didn't really happen, but Warren Beatty [as Bugsy Siegel] looks at a gambling joint in the middle of the desert and visualizes what would become Las Vegas. That's how I felt. I could see where the movie posters would go and how the counter would be set up. As an arthouse, it could be Cine-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

PHOTO BY MICHAEL ZIDLIMOWSKI

CHEERS!

IT'S THE BEER ISSUE

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FRIDA AT 5

» FROM PAGE 9

family meets the New Beverly"

However, he knew doing it right would be costly, and at the time, Long Beach Cinematheque had $2,000 in the bank. Money could be raised to get in the door in DTSA, but a costly digital conversion also loomed.

A larger issue would be what the new incarnation of the Fiesta Twin would represent. While Crow likes to present movies that represent who he is—"I am a Latin, LGBT, horror-movie lover"—the perception could not help but be that an artsy-fartsy arthouse would drive out a *mami y papi* theater to become the DTSA symbol for gentrification.

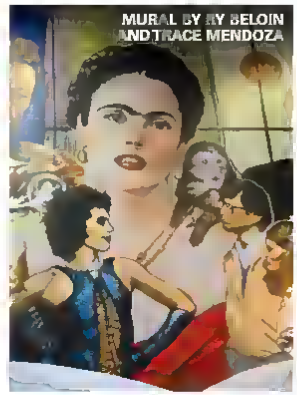


PHOTO BY MICHAEL ZIDAROWSKI

Before Fiesta Twin closed on Jan. 5, 2014, and reopened as the Frida Cinema on Feb. 21, 2014, an odd welcome had already come 11 months before, as summed up in the headline "Long Beach Cinematheque to Program Fiesta Twin Theatre in Downtown Santa Ana, Furthering the Area's Gentrification." The date: March 13, 2013. The publication, *OC Weekly*. The writer: yours truly.

The Frida Cinema and the DTSA gentrification have gone together like Bogey and Bacall. Of course, before Crow's arrival, the Chases' rebranding of the Fiesta Marketplace as East End had been chided, as summed up by another Weekling, former *el jefe* Gustavo Arellano, who accused the family of "driving out every last vestige" of Mexican culture in the area.

Ryan Chase now says it was clear to him the downfall of the Fiesta Twin and other DTSA businesses—whose predominantly Latino clientele migrated to big retail and entertainment chains that were wooing them specifically—indicated that market forces had dictated a multicultural crowd was vital to the survival of Fiesta Marketplace/East End.

Not everyone bought that argument. Outside the Yost in October 2016, Santa Ana City Council members mingled with Chase and other business owners and merchants to celebrate the American Planning Association having honored DTSA with one of its 16 "Great Neighborhoods in America" awards. The turd in the punch bowl came in the form of protesters with signs and loud chants of "Gentrification is racist!" marching toward—where else?—the Frida Cinema.

Protege Santa Ana-Against Gentrification members say *they* were the ones taunted one evening in August 2017, when they showed up to disrupt a Downtown Inc forum at the Frida before being escorted out by police. "Our demands were clear," read the group's recap of the evening via Facebook. "Get out of Santa Ana."

Crow says he knew from the get-go the gentrification rap would be applied to whatever moved into the Fiesta Twin space. That's why, before he even took the gig, he met with Latino artists downtown to explain his vision for a cultural gathering place that was community-based and mission-driven. Crow says he was told that as long as the theater stuck to that, it would be fine, but any deviation would be found out, exposed and amplified to Frida's peril.

The most symbolic gesture, which came after months of agonizing, was naming the 680-seat venue after Frida Kahlo, the lauded Mexican painter and champion of self-expression. Her portraits, self-portraits and other works were inspired by the nature, artifacts and popular culture of her native country as she explored questions of race, class, gender, identity and post-colonialism in Mexican society.

For the Frida Cinema, the real proof has been in the programming. Santa Ana's own OC Film Fiesta festival moved in during Frida's inaugural year, and there have been numerous bilingual screening events since, with some even flipping the old Fiesta Twin format by having Spanish-language films with English subtitles for the assembled *gabachos*.

In January 2016, Frida partnered with Arts Orange County to present screenings of *The Other Barrio*, a 2015 neo-film noir that follows a housing inspector investigating the suspicious circumstances of a fatal fire in a residential hotel in San Francisco's Latino Mission District. The two dates of showings were followed by panel discussions on gentrification and the displacement of low-income communities.

Four films were shown at Frida last year as part of Latin American Studies in Motion, a series of cultural events presented by UC Irvine and Bowers Museum, with California Humanities grant funding. That $5,000 award was aimed at programming of contemporary interest and relevance to Latin American and Latinx residents of Santa Ana, as well as community members interested in learning about Latin American history, culture, and recent social and environmental change.

Roma earned multiplex chain bans because it debuted on Netflix, so Frida showed Alfonso Cuarón's Spanish-language, gorgeously shot, black-and-white drama, which is loosely based on his middle-class Mexico City upbringing in the 1970s. The current Oscar-race leader with

10 nominations, including Best Picture, packed Frida for a week.

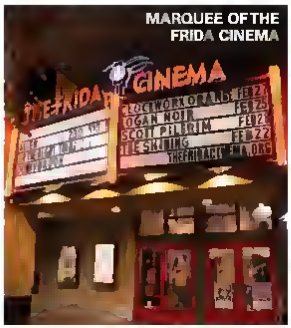
The nationally touring Hola Mexico Film Festival, which included nine Spanish-language films released south of the border recently, played over seven days at the Frida, with two showings of the excellent horror movie *Vuelven* drawing the largest crowds of anywhere except San Francisco.

Gentrification is one thing, but what about "gaytrification"? That's what New Santa Ana blogger Art Pedroza accused the Chase family of trading in by replacing Fiesta Twin with the Frida Cinema. (I swear had I known Pedroza was posting that on March 13, 2013, I would have saved my own gentrification bile for the next day.)

Pedroza's point was an arthouse and other like-minded businesses and their patrons would drive out mom-and-pop Mexican shops and, well, mom and pop Mexicans. Snark alert. "The silver lining in all this is that the creepy men who congregate at night in Santa Ana's Santiago Park will now have somewhere else to hook up in the dark."

Homophobia aside, the Frida has sought to make gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning people feel welcome—and vice versa. The marquee was paid for with proceeds from a fundraiser held by the grassroots group Gay Neighbors, Families and Friends of Santa Ana, who felt the old signage looked too worn and cracked.

Frida has returned the favor with screenings benefitting various LGBT



MARQUEE OF THE FRIDA CINEMA

PHOTO BY MICHAEL ZIOSKOWSKI

causes, from Orange County schools' Gay-Straight Alliance chapters to DeColores Queer OC's Reyes Scholarship, which provides financial support for transgendered youth after the tragic murder of DeColores founding member Zoraida Reyes. A screening of *Pride* celebrated the opening of the Frida's upstairs neighbor at 305 E. Fourth St., the Orange County LGBT satellite center. That nonprofit holds benefits at the Frida just about monthly, and there is no better place to watch season debuts and finales of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, hosted live and in-person "by the always fierce and fabulous duo Isabella Xochitl and Kunda Couture."

Crow says he is fine with programming challenging titles that draw only 15 to 20 viewers, so long as each of them leave the Frida being changed. He's as willing to take risks with a title as Chase was with him. "He took a *huge* risk," Crow says. "It's a pure, faith-based stab at this guy who seems passionate. The risk he took makes no sense in retrospect. Thank God he did. I am just eternally grateful."

His goals to make "Orange County's year-round film festival" even better includes physical repairs, "starting with the restrooms and moving to the lobby." Crow also wants to pump up marketing, upgrade the projector and sound system, bring in more guest speakers and educational programs, and carve out a small screening room for overflow crowds and student films. He would like the ability to sell liquor, hold more live events, screen 3D movies (and a 3D movie series!), offer scholarships to local filmmakers, hold classes for interns earning school credit, and develop his staff so people can do one job instead of several. Oh, and a certain executive director sure could use an assistant.

"We've talked a little bit here and there," says Chase, when asked if Crow has shared his goals. "I would like to see it taken to the next level, but I think that is going to take more patrons to help support it. By having a proven track record of doing what he's doing, which is showing films that are only seen by a few people in the country, by curating attractions as an independent operator, there is no question he can reach his goals."

As for how much the Chases are willing to assist with that, he answers, "My family and I did some very creative things to get the theater off the ground."

He did not want to elaborate except to say, "We did some stuff most owners don't do. But we believed in Logan, we believed in his concept, we believed in the area, and we believed it would be very good for the community."

Chase says he was convinced his family made the right decision after he walked out of a downtown restaurant, looked over at the Frida Cinema entrance and saw a long line of people waiting to get in. Each was in costume, as the theater is a safe space for cosplayers to congregate.

"That's the epitome of what you just don't see anywhere else in Orange County," Chase says. "It is so cool and unique. And we knew it really would just keep getting better and improving. We support Logan, we believe in him, because he does amazing things at the Frida. I am happy for him."

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

THE FRIDA CINEMA'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY SCREENING AND CELEBRATION

at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana; thefridacinema.org. Thursday, Feb. 21, mixer, 6:30 p.m.; presentation on the theater's accomplishments and a screening of Michael Curtiz's 1942 masterpiece *Casablanca*, 7:30 p.m. $20 (includes drinks, hors d'oeuvres, movie, popcorn and soda)

*calendar

tuesday›
THAT'S MADAME BUTTERFLY TO YOU

COURTESY OF ORANGE COUNTY S PACIFIC SYMPHONY

fri/02/22

[BURLESQUE]

Bear Naked

Bearlesque

Calling all Yogis and Boo-Boos: OC Pride needs your bewhiskered bodacious bodies at this dazzling and daring fundraiser to ensure another spectacular Pride festival in June! Drag queen Isabella Xochitl hosts the sexy men of Bearlesque, who'll strut across the stage and mingle with the crowd while you enjoy a three-course dinner, sassy super-sized stage shows, and a sea of burly bodies sweating it out until closing. Strap on your leather and slip into your flannel and come show off your goods for a great cause!

MORE ONLINE ›› OCWEEKLY.COM

Bearlesque at VLVT Lounge, 416 W Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 664-0663, www.velvetoc.com. 7 p.m. $39.99-$59.99. —SR DAVIES

[CONCERT]

POWER POP PARTY

Those Pretty Wrongs

As Those Pretty Wrongs, Big Star's Jody Stephens and musician's musician Luther Russell do dreamy-gleam-y '70s-style power-pop with an emphasis on the pretty parts. And for something completely different: what is sure to be an ultra-rare performance of the soundtrack for the mysterious, lost '70s trucker movie *Stinker Lets Loose!* There's a long backstory here, but basically the *Stinker Lets Loose!* phenomenon is somewhere between obsessive parody and reincarnation, created by a lot of people working under pseudonyms. Expect Charlie Daniels-by-way-of-Cracker-Barrel vibes.

Those Pretty Wrongs, Kontrol and GRMLN at Burger Records, 645 S. State College Blvd., Ste. A, Fullerton, (714) 447-4280; burgerrecords.com. 7 p.m. Free. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

sat/02/23

[COMEDY]

THE LIBRARY IS OPEN

Haters Roast

Grab those eyelashes and all things glam because there's nothing but love (and glitter) at the Haters Roast: The Shady Tour, starring the fabulous contestants of *RuPaul's Drag Race* on VH1. Come for a night of giggles, big hair and good, old-fashioned roasting by your favorite queens, including grand dame/hostess Danenne Lake, Latrice Royale, Alyssa Edwards, Thorgy Thor, Vanjie and *Drag Race* season 5 winner Jinx Monsoon. This ain't your mama's comedy, and there is no holding back when these ladies step onstage. Be prepared for huge laughs, unapologetic, scandalous fun, and plenty of "MissVanjeeeeeeee!" chants to go around.

Haters Roast: The Shady Tour at House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim. 7 p.m. $37.50-$52.50. —LILA SHAKTI

[FOOD & DRINK]

Party Like a Wizard

Wizards Assemble Pub Crawl

Once a year, witchcraft and craft beer come together for Wizards Assemble's magical pub crawl. Starting at Costa Mesa's Harp Inn, this year's event will ensure you feel as if you are in the wizarding world with an interactive sorting hat and a themed drink menu at every stop (the route will be dispatched at check-in). All participating wizards are encouraged to come in their most extraordinary costumes for a chance to win an award for Best Dressed. Show off more than your drinking skills throughout the night at the *Harry Potter* trivia competitions. Floo powder will not be needed to get from pub to pub because they're all within walking distance of one another. And any bar cover charges will be waived away for those participating.

Wizards Assemble Pub Crawl starts at the Harp Inn, 130 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa; www.wizardsassemble.com. 4 p.m. $25-$30. 21+. —LAUREN GALVAN

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sun/02/24

[FESTIVALS]

The New Americana

Afro-Latinx Festival

You don't want to miss the celebration of culture going down in Long Beach. The Afro-Latinx festival is an exciting party featuring Peruvian food, Garifuna music and breathtaking art that represents the African influence in Latin American communities. The Museum of Latin American Art serves as the backdrop for this event, and you can tour it throughout the night or even check out the sculpture gardens, where you'll find live performers including ABADA Capoeira and Quitapenas. There will also be art workshops reflecting the styles of the Americas, face painting, and craft activities going on while DJ Eusebio Akasa throws down some funky jams to get you out on the dance floor

Afro-Latinx Festival at the Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, (562) 437-1689, molaa.org. 11 a.m. Free. —MORGAN EDWARDS

[COMEDY]

At the Movies

Oscar Viewing Gala

This year's televised Oscars ceremony won't feature a host, so Newport Dunes Waterfront is holding a special viewing party with comics as stand-in hosts for the night. Inside the Back Bistro, Zach Miller and special guests Ben Gonzalez and Ariel Kashanchi will provide humorous banter and asides to complement the real-time events onscreen. And to keep you even more engaged, guests are encouraged to dress up for red-carpet photo ops, give predictions on the winners and play along with trivia for prizes. It'll be 10 times better than that year James Franco hosted—although we'd prefer to forget that.

Oscar Viewing Gala 2019 at Back Bistro at Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort, 1131 Back Bay Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 729-3863, newportdunes.com. 2.30 p.m. $20. —AIMEE MURILLO

mon/02/25

[ART]

Close Encounters

'Stargazers: Intersections of Contemporary Art and Astronomy'

Orange Coast College's new planetarium is scheduled to open in spring 2019, and as a concurrent attraction, its Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion features "Stargazers: Intersections of Contemporary Art and Astronomy." Curated by Tyler Stallings, the multimedia installation explores our universe and reflects upon questions of space, time and the human condition both within and beyond the observable universe. Contributing artists include Lita Albuquerque, George Legrady, Penelope Umbrico, Carol Saindon, among others.

"Stargazers: Intersections of Contemporary Art and Astronomy" at the Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, (714) 432-5738, orangecoastcollege.edu. 10 a.m. Through April 6. Free. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

tue/02/26

[THEATER]

That's Opera, Folks

Madame Butterfly

Almost 115 years after its operatic debut (Puccini saw it four years earlier as a one-act play in London, and well, it was love), the elaborate *Madame Butterfly* comes to the Segerstrom Center. *Butterfly* is the story of a young Japanese girl and her unwavering devotion to the American naval officer she wed—who left right after the marriage and, yeah, turns out to be a snake. It's depressing as hell, but the costumes are gorgeous and the music is legendary. Just as any good opera should be, really.

Madame Butterfly at Segerstrom Center Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 8 p.m. $71-$206. —ERIN DEWITT

wed/02/27

TRAFALGAR RELEASING

[FILM]

DOWN TO HER
Joni 75

Fresh off a performance at the Clive Davis Grammy Party in Beverly Hills a few weeks ago, legendary singer Joni Mitchell is celebrated at the Frida. In honor of her 75th birthday, the Canadian-born singer was honored by many of her peers and the artists she influenced in a concert that was recorded over a two-night span at the Music Center at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. The show features a wide range of artists, including Brandi Carlile, Kris Kristofferson, Seal, Graham Nash, Norah Jones, Los Lobos, Chaka Khan and more. And now, the once-in-a-lifetime concert gets a limited release in theaters before heading to DVD, giving fans a chance to experience it on the big screen, which is almost as good as being there in person.

Joni 75 at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 8 p.m. $7-$10.
—WYOMING REYNOLDS

[ART]

Gracias, Cheech!
'Papel Chicano Dos'

Before it moves to its permanent home in Riverside, you can see these selected works from comedian/actor/director Cheech Marin's massive collection of Chicano art, purchased over a lifetime and shared as a gift of cultural education and activism. Inside Anaheim's gorgeous Muzeo, the 65 pieces by 24 established and emerging artists that make up "Papel Chicano Dos" show off Marin's good taste, curiosity, and commitment to a varied and inclusive presentation of a history of a movement, 10 years after its groundbreaking, wildly popular first visit. The works will next be installed in the under-development Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art.

"Papel Chicano Dos: Works on Paper From the Collection of Cheech Marin" at Muzeo, 241 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 956-8936, muzeo.org. 10 a.m. Through July 14. $7-$10.
—ANDREW TONKOVICH

thu/02/28

[CONCERT]

Synth Sense
Terminal A

Combine the stripped-down industrial soundscapes of Sisters of Mercy with the stage presence of Ian Dury, throw in a little classic hardcore punk and maybe some My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult, and you might come up with something close to Terminal A. Since 2012, these Southern California natives have been hypnotizing audiences with their blend of minimal beats, effects-laden guitar riffs and emotive vocals. The poetic lyrics from songs such as "Fruits of Gomorrah" and "Queen Mab" show the Los Angeles-based duo is more of an aesthetic force than a band. They may only have two members, but their live shows are more theatrical than Iggy Pop's cameo on *Star Trek* (YouTube it!).

Terminal A with Mom and the Mad-man, Tunnels and Flesh at the Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, wayfarercm.com. 8 p.m. $5. 21+.
—STEVE DONOFRIO

[THEATER]

HE'S BACK
Revenge of the Baron's Revenge

The mad Baron Frankenstein is up to no good in D. Chapelle's creepy, kooky play *Revenge of the Baron's Revenge*. This family-friendly, interactive production transports audiences to the Gothic town of Muldavia, where Emma and Eddie Doozlehoff are just married and ready to settle down in their castle along with their faithful servant Rogi, and head of house, Frau Helga Graveshousen. But lo, the evil Baron Frankenstein, whom the Doozlehoffs were able to thwart years ago, has returned with a mean vengeance. Filled with screwball-comedy energy and an all-around homage to classic, black-and-white monster movies, this performance will connect with audience members ages 8 and older as it spews suspenseful thrills and spooky humor.

MORE ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

Revenge of the Baron's Revenge at Garage Theatre, 251 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, (562) 433-8337, www.thegaragetheatre.org. 8 p.m. Through March 9. $10-$25.
—AIMEE MURILLO

What's In a Name?

Heirloom, a Modern Farmhouse in Huntington Beach has a similar name to another restaurant but is quite different

BY EDWIN GOEI

Like the similarly named Dermot Mulroney and Dylan McDermott, the new Huntington Beach restaurant called Heirloom, a Modern Farmhouse doesn't have much in common with Heirloom Farmhouse Kitchen in Irvine. The former is an intimate bistro that shares a parking lot with Wings N' Things in a Beach Boulevard strip mall, while the latter is the sprawling eatery inside the swanky new Irvine Spectrum Marriott.

If it weren't for the fact that both chose to use the words *Heirloom* and *Farmhouse* in their names, neither would be mentioned in the same breath. They are diametrically opposed in almost every way. Marriott's Heirloom Farmhouse Kitchen is corporate-owned and caters to millennials on business trips. Heirloom, a Modern Farmhouse, on the other hand, is the passion project of two women—the mother-daughter team of Leonora Clancy and chef Brianne Clancy—and when you're there, you get the feeling the other customers are from the neighborhood and found the place through good, old-fashioned word-of-mouth.

Leonora greets you at the door. And when she welcomes you in and tells you she considers the restaurant an extension of her home, you believe it. The window treatments look as if they're from a country cottage, and there's a wall in the back decorated with nothing but her family snapshots. Some of the photos are of her daughter, Brianne, when she was a lot younger. And when Leonora tells you of the circuitous route Brianne's career took before they decided to open this place together, you see her pride welling up.

The younger Clancy, she says, started out in international relations but went back to school for a culinary degree. Then came stints as sous chef at Old Vine Cafe, Sapphire Laguna and Mama's On 39. Her last gig was with BlackHouse Hospitality, where she helped Tin Vuong open Bluegold and LSXO at Pacific City.

Now, Brianne—or Chef Bri, as she's called—is the engine and creative force behind this place. On most nights, when the dining room is packed, you can hardly see her behind a counter full of customers as she salts, sautés, and plates dishes in her tiny show kitchen.

Her cuisine fits the bistro mold. This is food made to be enjoyed with an assertive glass of wine. Every plate feels rustic, and most dishes are showered with flurries of Parmesan. If you opt for something from the appetizer share plates, the crispy eggplant is a best seller. Breaded aubergine deep-fried to rigid planks and served with glops of oozy burrata, puddles of pesto and slices of heirloom tomato she calls a "carpaccio."

COMFORTS OF HOME

EDWIN GOEI

She also breads and fries portobello mushrooms the same way, serving them upright in a cone as though fries, with sides of harissa aioli and pesto aioli—both sauces razor-sharp and garlic-forward. The eggplant and the portobello have similar flavor profiles, but the eggplant is better; it's a more balanced dish, and so substantial a vegetarian could order it as a main course.

If it's mushrooms you want, there's a mushroom potage that's labeled as velouté. It comes in a big, asymmetrical bowl and tastes like an upgraded can of Campbell's. She garnishes the thick soup with crispy fried sunchoke and a drizzle of basil oil. And as you sip your first spoonful, you get a whiff of the truffle essence she added. It almost compensates for the fact that the soup is served at room temperature.

Main courses range from a roasted chicken with pork cassoulet to a filet mignon with a blue cheese demi-glace. There's also a short rib bourguignon that starts as the classic French slow braise of beef and wine, but is then served in a modern way on a shallow, oblong plate with a celery mousseline subbing for the potatoes.

One of the cheaper dishes is the scallops. She sears each of the three meaty cylinders until the outer part caramelizes but the cores are still wiggly. As a starch, she spoons on a creamy leek risotto. And to layer on the flavors, she adds an artichoke tapenade, a roasted tomato for acidity, and a tarragon cream sauce that manages to excuse the pieces of asparagus that came from the fibrous stem end of the plant.

The most personal dish you can have at Heirloom is the "old/new school" onion dip. It's a thick, cheesy spread that comes out in a jar and is piled with massive amounts of golden-fried shallots and garlic chips. When you tuck into it, you notice the potato chips are Ruffles, but then you realize it has to be Ruffles because no other chip, store bought or homemade, could measure up. And if the Clancys hosted a Super Bowl party at their actual home, you figure this dip would be there, and you'd be invited in just as warmly as you were welcomed here . . . except that there, you probably shouldn't double dip.

HEIRLOOM, A MODERN FARMHOUSE
18344 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, (714) 375-6543; www.heirloomhb.com. Open Mon.-Sat., 5-10 p.m. Share plates, $10-$18, mains, $25-$52. Beer and wine.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

It's FeBREWary

February 2019 will officially go down as FeBREWary, as Santa Ana and Long Beach have seen new breweries open, with more coming soon to Costa Mesa.

SANTA ANA RIVER BREWING
OC history buffs might know the Santa Ana River is what helped the local agriculture thrive throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s. Nowadays, the river has at least 10 breweries within a mile of it. The latest comes from Geoff Brand and Mike Miller, who aim to put as many pounds of hops through their brewhouse as it will physically hold. *3840 W. Warner Ave., Ste. B, Santa Ana, www.santaanariverbrewing.com. Opened Feb. 16.*

AMBITIOUS ALES
I first tried Ambitious Ales at Santa Ana's Brew at the Zoo event a few years ago, and someone noted one of the five owners, Garrett Carroll, was my dopelganger, which I thought was a high compliment. The gang of five friends are set to open a spot in a historic camera-repair-shop building in Bixby Knolls. *4019 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, www.ambitiousales.com. Opened Feb. 16.*

SALTY BEAR BREWING CO.
Keep looking for radar blips, as this spot on the Costa Mesa Beer Trail is set to open "soon." *2948 Randolph Ave., Ste. C, Costa Mesa, www.saltybearbrewing.com.*

BREWING RESERVE OF CALIFORNIA
Husband and wife Steve and Teryle Aguilar built a cozy cave of beer just down the street from a Lamborghini dealership and IKEA. Their goal is to cultivate a strong neighborhood pub with approachable beers and even a flight of lemonades from different fruit varietals. *2930 College Ave., Costa Mesa, brcbeer.com. Opening delayed; check the Instagram (@brcbeer) for more updates!*

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

CHRIS NAGEL

Tasty Meal Deals

Dine Out Long Beach Restaurant Week 2.0

COURTESY VUE BAR + RESTAURANT

LongBeachLunch
» ERIN DEWITT

The fourth-annual Dine Out Long Beach Restaurant Week 2.0, (not to be confused with Dine LBC Restaurant Week, which occurs in the summer) begins Sunday, and thanks to founder and organizer Elizabeth Borsting, this citywide feast has grown nicely out of those awkward early years into a fully thriving food event.

More than 50 local restaurants (with at least 20 of those eateries being dog-friendly) offer special plates and exclusive prix-fixe menus on the cheap (or cheap-ish). Dinner selections start at $20, and breakfast and lunch options start at just $10. There's also optional beer and wine pairings at many places for an additional charge.

Though Long Beach residents aren't exactly complaining about two competing restaurant weeks (we've got one of the most burgeoning food scenes in Southern California), we wondered, "What's new this time around?"

"In order to brand Dine Out Long Beach as the city's premier dining event, we try to keep it familiar from year to year, but add subtle changes," says Borsting. She explains that this year's event includes a new contest in which guests can vote for their favorite Restaurant Week dish for a chance to win a trip for two to Catalina Island. "We also have some unconventional destinations that other Restaurant Weeks don't include," she says, "such as Dine + Duffy with London Boat Rentals, plus Chow + Ciao with Gondola Getaways. For these two options, you have the choice to pick up food from one of our participating restaurants and enjoy it while cruising the canals along Naples Island."

Whether you opt to enjoy your meal on land or water, there's no shortage of cuisines to choose from. Participating establishments include standards such as Naples Rib Co., the Crooked Duck and Fuego, plus newcomers the Pie Bar, Long Beach Fish Grill, Salud, Ashley's On Fourth, Buona Gente and District Wine.

There's also a host of recently opened spots jumping in, including Table 301, Ammatoli, the Ordinarie, 4th Horseman, La Bodega and Marina Wine.

Here are a few of the menus I'm looking forward to the most:

A three-course meal at **District Wine** downtown can include (should you choose this strategy) strawberry-jalapeño jam with goat cheese and baguette, followed by a pork-belly grilled cheese sandwich and a skillet cookie, all for $30 for two people.

Look closely and you may find some exclusive menu items not usually offered, such as the pan-roasted chicken at **Vue Bar & Restaurant** that comes with rice, shallots, green olives and dates in a butter sauce. They're also serving a cheesecake bar just for the week.

Tha Pie Bar is offering savory pot pies (chicken or spicy black bean and corn) paired with a slice of sweet (hello, Mississippi Mud); there's even a "Pet Pie" menu with some all-natural pumpkin treats for dogs (another exclusive for the fest).

Louisiana Charlie's in Shoreline Village is offering a $45-per-person menu with options such as barbecue shrimp, crawfish etouffee and catfish, and peach cobbler. Also, there's a smash cake.

Michael's On Naples has unsurprisingly one of the fanciest lunch prix fixes on the lineup, with braised oxtail, handmade pasta with rabbit confit, and lemon torte. That'll set you back $50 per person, though. Michael's Pizzeria next door, however, has a menu half the price that includes wood-fired manila clams, mushroom-and-taleggio pizza, and tiramisu.

Make your reservations on Dine Out's website, and plan your weeklong culinary indulgence one meal at a time—because another thing that makes an appearance every winter? Oversized sweat pants as totally acceptable outerwear. That's only at my house? Fine.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

For more Dine Out Long Beach Restaurant Week 2.0 locations and information, visit www.dineoutlongbeach.com.

Hi-Time Wine Cellars

Spirit Specials!

Maker's Mark 1.75L
Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey
Regularly $49.99
SALE $37.99

Knob Creek 750ml
Small Batch
Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey
Regularly $29.99
SALE $19.99

Canadian Club 1.75L
Premium Extra Aged
Blended Canadian Whisky
Regularly $25.99
SALE $13.99

Prices valid from Feb. 21-28, limited to stock on hand; no rain checks. More sale items at hitimewine.net!

250 Ogle Street • Costa Mesa
(behind Staples on 17th St.)
949.650.8463 • www.hitimewine.net

FOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

Taco 'Bout Awesome!

Celebrating National Margarita Day at Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen

If you ever get bored, look up "February" and "national day," and prepare to be shocked at the absurdity. For instance, Feb. 5 is National Shower With a Friend Day. The ninth? National Toothache Day. WTF? But goddam if I didn't stumble upon National Margarita Day, which is Feb. 22. Imagine if you were to combine all of these things into one big party, one in which you can share a margarita with a homie in the shower after punching each other in the teeth.

If you were to visualize the perfect margarita, I'm pretty sure it would look something like the classic at Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen which is built on 100 percent blue agave tequila, Cointreau, fresh lime juice and agave syrup, costing a mere $9 ($7 during happy hour). Specialty versions are only a buck-fifty more, such as the mango habanero, which has a touch of throat-tickling heat, and a seasonally available ruby-red grapefruit, which drinks like a zippy Paloma.

For National Margarita Day, Cha Cha's is bringing back one of my all-time favorites, the El Palomar, for happy hour prices all day. Hibiscus tea lends a pink hue to the drink, which is shaken with serrano chile, classic margarita ingredients and AsomBroso Blanco. The drink is bursting with raw citrus vibes. Speaking of vibes, ask your server to show you the AsomBroso bottle, which resembles a glass sex toy. Don't be surprised when your server pops it on your table for you and your mates to admire.

For bites, start off with a gooey queso fundido and the house corn tortillas. If your server offers to upgrade to a chorizo queso (a combination of queso and chorizo), go for it. If you're still sticking to a new year's diet, go for the cool ahi aguachile or one of the several house ceviches.

Taco flights come in sets of three; $14 gets you one set, and $25 gets you a plate full of six. My table went for them all, and the unanimous winner was the short-rib taco with goat cheese and diced radish. The guajillo-braised beef acts like a mop filled with a rich chile-umami jus that refuses to get wrung out. The addition of goat cheese didn't sound great on paper, but damn if it didn't help me achieve a higher level of taco-consciousness.

Feb. 22 is also National Skip the Straw Day, so be sure to sip your margaritas from the salt-crusted rim!

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW
» GREG NAGEL

CHA CHA'S LATIN KITCHEN
at the Birch Street Promenade, 110 W. Birch St., Ste. 7, Brea, (714) 255-1040, also at the Tustin/Irvine Marketplace, 13126 Jamboree Rd., Irvine, (714) 408-7819, www.chachaslatinkitchen.com.

DON'T CALL HER A FREAK

ROBERT VIGLASKY

Ready to Rumble

Fighting With My Family is a humorous biopic on WWE star Paige

BY AIMEE MURILLO

If you've ever seen British WWE wrestler Paige spar in the ring, you're likely to fear her—she's a snarling wildcat dressed in black-leather metalhead attire and wrapped in a Goth mystique. If you don't fear the two-time Divas Champion—the youngest ever to hold the title in WWE history, in fact—her formidable submission holds such as "the Paige Turner" would at least leave you pretty impressed.

Now retired, Paige is credited for positively influencing the image of women wrestlers in the WWE as venerable athletes and competitors (whither Chyna, though?) She's seen as the "Anti-Diva," the first woman wrestler to challenge the common trope of former cheerleaders and models who become bouncy, buxom eye candy She's so charismatic to watch she joined the E! reality show *Total Divas* in 2014 to allow people to see her irreverent personality and wild side in a more intimate setting.

Paige—whose real name is Saraya-Jade Bevis—is the subject of writer/director Stephen Merchant's biopic *Fighting With My Family*. Based on an earlier documentary of the same name that revolves around Bevis and her family of professional wrestlers, this film is a semi-fictionalized portrayal of her beginnings as a wrestler, from a 13-year-old tag teaming with her parents and brother to her auditioning for the WWE and subsequent rise to fame via her talent and prowess

With Merchant at the helm, *Fighting With My Family* takes the piss out of the normal biopic and mines brash humor from Paige's story for an enjoyable film fit for wrestling and non-wrestling fans alike There's also a feel-good, heartwarming message about the bond among family, as well as an underdog tale of a young female who uses wrestling as an escape from reality and finds her purpose, success and niche, while in the rest of the world, her Gothic otherness makes her a freak.

It's a winning combination of elements, and Merchant and the cast make it a fun-to-watch production. But just like the world of wrestling itself, *Fighting With My Family* follows a paint-by-numbers script that, in the end, feels a bit sanitized, so that Paige, played by Florence Pugh, comes across less like the leather-clad badass she is in real life and more like an insecure youth who doesn't know what she's wrestling for in the first place. While it obviously serves the purpose of her character arc, there's no effort in showing what really makes her the striking personality that made her interesting enough to be the focus of a film, so I'm left starving to see the feral contender "ram-Paige" across the screen.

The film follows closely to Paige's origins in Norwich, England, where she and her family teach wrestling to youth as World Association of Wrestling (WAW) Young Saraya Knight and her brother, Zak Zodiac (Jack Lowden), teach classes while their formerly drug-abusing, hard-luck parents—"Rowdy" Ricky Knight (Nick Frost) and Sweet Saraya (Lena Headey)—worry about money from low ticket sales to their weekly matches. After months of their audition tapes being rejected, Saraya and Zak get a call from the WWE that auditions are being held in London for the next wrestling superstars. Both siblings spar in a round of auditions with other hopefuls, but only Saraya is approved for the next round of evaluations.

With Zak having a girlfriend and baby to consider, the drama is set as Saraya's guilt for leveling up in her wrestling career without him offsets her focus She soon sets off for Florida to train as new obstacles surface Saraya has a hard time defining her character and creating a fearsome persona, and she freezes up when rowdy crowds are heckling her Besides that, Saraya is easily triggered by a trio of ex-models and cheerleaders in her Florida training group who remind her of the conventionally prettier girls in her teens who singled her out as a weirdo With the wise counseling of her coach, Hutch Morgan (Vince Vaughn), and her brother Zak's support, Saraya strengthens her alter ego and makes her WWE Raw debut as Paige, owning Divas Champion AJ Lee and becoming the youngest winner of the title at a spunky 18 years old.

Pugh and her co-stars easily bounce between comedy and drama, with a script by Merchant (who previously wrote for *The Office* and is a frequent collaborator with Ricky Gervais) that provides a balance between lighthearted humor and non-judgmental allusions to the family's dark, checkered past. It also refuses to play the game of justifying any bit of internalized misogyny within Saraya, who sees her female training rivals as well-rounded, complex women and not just tits and ass—a huge win, honestly

There's no strong compulsion within me to tap out of *Fighting With My Family*, but I wish the much-alluded-to "special quality" that made Saraya/Paige stand out to WWE producers was more explicit. Still, there's not many movies that celebrate the world of wrestling, nor the women within it, that, along with Pugh's phenomenal performance, makes this a film worth rooting for

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FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY **was written and directed by Stephen Merchant, and stars Dwayne Johnson, Florence Pugh, Lena Headey, Nick Frost and Jack Lowden**

All Power to All the People

BY MATT COKER

A Star Is Born. You have a choice this week: See Bradley Cooper's feature directorial debut inside a theater for the price of a ticket or outside for free with an accompanying trivia contest. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Thurs., Feb. 21, all day; Sat., 4 p.m. $9.95-$13.70; also at Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932. Fri., 7 p.m. $9.75-$13.75; 4th Street Market; thefridacinema.org. Wed., trivia contest, 7 p.m., screening, 8 p.m. Free*

They Shall Not Grow Old. Peter Jackson's "most personal" film is this 2018 World War I documentary that was culled from archival footage and 600 hours of BBC interviews. *Starlight Cinema City, (714) 970-6700; starlightcinemas.com. Thurs., Feb. 21, 11:35 a.m., 5:05 & 10:35 p.m. $6-$12; also at Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 1, 4, 7 & 10 p.m. $11.45-$14.70; and Edwards Foothill Towne Center Stadium 22, (949) 588-9402. Thurs., Feb. 21, 1 & 4 p.m. $11.45-$14.70.*

Gully Boy. Zoya Akhtar's musical romdram is a coming-of-age story based on the lives of street rappers in Mumbai. *Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26 (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 12:10, 3:25, 6:40 & 9:55 p.m. $9.95-$13.20; also at Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 12:20, 3:40 & 7 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

Manikarnika the Queen of Jhansi. Radha Krishna Jagarlamudi's new action/bio-drama is on Rani Lakshmibai, one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and her resistance to the British Raj. *Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 12:40 & 7:30 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

Vice. Adam McKay details the rise of Dick Cheney, the most powerful vice president in history. *UA Long Beach 6, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 12:45, 4 & 7:15 p.m. $10.05-$12.95; also at various theaters; www.fandango.com. Thurs., Feb. 21, 4 p.m.; Sat., 7 p.m. Check website for ticket prices; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932. Sat., 4 p.m. $9.75-$11*

The Wife. Glenn Close plays a spouse who questions her life choices on the way to Sweden, where her husband is getting a Nobel Prize. *Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 12:50 & 3 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

Labyrinth. In this 1986 fantasy adventure, 15-year-old Sarah wishes her baby brother away then has 13 hours to get the little poop machine back. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Feb. 21, 2:30 & 5 p.m.; Sun., noon & 2:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Shoplifters. A family that relies on shoplifting to cope with poverty takes in a little girl they find in the freezing cold. *Art Theatre; artheatrelongbeach.org. Thurs., Feb. 21, 3:45 p.m. $9-$11*

Power to Heal. The public-television documentary focuses on the historic struggle to secure equal and adequate access to health care for all Americans. *UC Irvine School of Law, (949) 824-2493. Thurs., Feb. 21, 5:30 p.m. Free.*

Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga. Sweety must contend with her family, a young writer smitten with her, and a society and true love who may not accept her family in a small Punjab town. *Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb. 21, 5:40 & 8:25 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

***Studio 54* and Live Director Q&A.** The rise and fall of Studio 54 founders Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, whose New York City club was the epicenter of 1970s hedonism. *Art Theatre, artheatrelongbeach.org. Thurs., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. $9-$12.*

***Werk ohne Autor* (*Never Look Away*).** Artist Kurt Barnert escaped from East Germany to West Germany but remained tormented by his childhood under the Nazi and German Democratic Republic regimes. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri.; call theater for show times and ticket prices.*

***Todos lo saben* (*Everybody Knows*).** A Spanish woman returns with her children from Argentina to attend her sister's wedding in Madrid. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri.; call theater for show times and ticket prices.*

Tu Dust. A Hasidic cantor decides he must understand the decomposition process to get over grieving for his recently deceased wife. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Opens Fri.; call theater for show times and ticket prices.*

BlacKkKlansman. A black Colorado Springs police detective tries to make a name for himself by infiltrating the Ku Klux Klan. *Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932. Thurs., Feb. 21, 10 p.m. $6-$11; also at various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

Lynching, Violence, and Representation: Colloquium and Film Screening. Kevin Wilson Jr.'s 2017 historical drama short *My Nephew Emmetts* on Moses Wright's attempt to protect his nephew from two racist killers in Missouri. *UC Irvine, (949) 824-6117. Fri., 11 a.m. Free.*

The Shining. A writer brings his wife and son with him to look over the elegant Overlook Hotel deep in the Colorado Rockies in the wintery off-season. Let's just say things take a turn. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 7:30 p.m. $10.*

FOCUS FEATURES

Jimi Hendrix: Electric Church. This rockumentary chronicles the electric-guitar god's largest U.S. performance. *Art Theatre, artheatrelongbeach.org. Fri.-Sat., 9:15 p.m. $9-$11*

The NeverEnding Story. A tormented boy "borrows" an ancient storybook about the mythical land of Fantasia, which is in desperate need of a hero. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 11:30 a.m., 2, 5 & 7:30 p.m., Sun., 11:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Bombs Away Live! Presents Showgirls. Paul Verhoeven's 1995 take on the notorious Joe Eszterhas' screenplay about a shapely young woman who arrives in Las Vegas with dreams of becoming a top showgirl but first lands a job at a seedy strip club. *The Frida Cinema; thefridacinema.org. Sat., 7 p.m. $15.*

Alien. The crew of a space merchant vessel headed back to Earth is awakened from a deep sleep by a distress call from a nearby planet. Upon further investigation, they discover they're not alone. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun., 9:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

A Clockwork Orange. Stanley Kubrick's masterful 1971 adaptation of Anthony Burgess' novel mixes hyperreality with ultra violence. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., Feb. 20, 2:30, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***La vendedora de fosforo* (*The Little Match Girl*).** A modernist composer tries to push forward an impossible piece of music inside of an orchestra convulsed by union demands. *UCI, (949) 824-6117. Wed., 4 p.m. Free.*

Way Out West. Laurel and Hardy attempt to deliver the deed to a goldmine, only to have it stolen. *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

Gone With the Wind. Scarlett O'Hara pursues the husband of her cousin Melanie and marries Rhett Butler. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Feb. 28, 1 & 6 p.m. $12.50.*

Sixteen Candles. The 1984 movie that helped make its late writer/director John Hughes the Frank Capra of teen films. *Fullerton Public Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Feb. 28, 1 p.m. Free.*

National Theatre Live: *Antony & Cleopatra.* A broadcast of a recording from the London stage of director Simon Godwin's production of Shakespeare's famous play. *Irvine Barclay Theatre, www.thebarclay.org. Thurs., Feb. 28, discussion, 5 p.m. Free, but RSVP requested-broadcast, 6:30 p.m. $17-$22.*

Freedom Writers: Stories From the Heart. Erin Gruwell was a young English teacher when she inspired at-risk students to become more tolerant and to pursue education beyond graduation. *Chapman University, (714) 997-6812. Thurs., Feb. 28, screening, 6 p.m., panel discussion, 7 p.m., audience Q&A, 7:45 p.m., book signing, 8 p.m. Free, but an RSVP is appreciated.*

The Mystery of Picasso. It's a filmed record of Paolo Picasso painting numerous canvases for the camera, allowing viewers to see his creative process at work. *Huntington Beach Art Center, (714) 374-1650. Thurs., Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m. Free, but donations are gladly accepted.*

Scott Pilgrim vs the World. Edgar Wright's stunningly original movie follows Sex Bob-omb band member Scott, who must fight to the death if he is to win Ramona's heart. *The Frida Cinema; thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Feb. 28, 7:30 & 10 p.m. $10.*

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A Sunday School Teacher Who Kills

The notorious tale of Lizzie Borden comes to the Chance Theater

BY JOEL BEERS

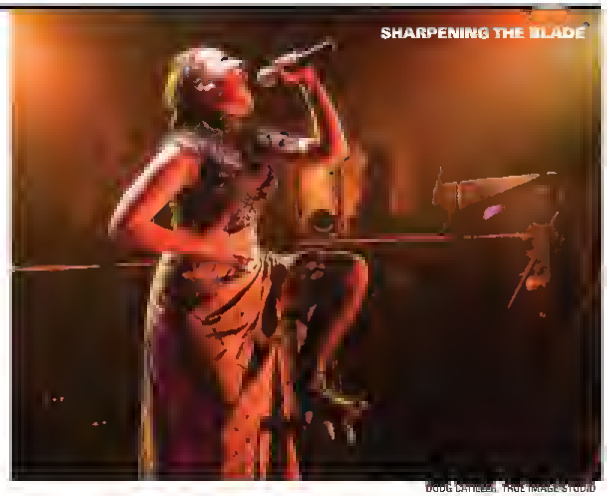
Strange and bizarre subjects are certainly not uncommon to musicals. Whether it's human-size cats bounding across a stage or a town where urine is taxed, there doesn't seem anything too out there to be turned into some form of song-and-dance spectacle.

But all too often, those shows don't do more than prove the human imagination is quite capable of turning even a cow's ear into silk. The shows might be fun and well-put-together, but they don't amount to more than what they are: strange and bizarre.

That isn't the case with *Lizzie the Musical*, which recounts the tale of Lizzie Borden, the notorious, ax-wielding murderess who hacked her father and stepmother to death in a small Massachusetts town in 1892. Creators Steven Cheslik-deMeyer, Tim Maner and Alan Stevens Hewitt weren't content with merely dramatizing the gory story of the real-life woman turned into a character of American mythology through a nursery-like rhyme. Instead, using a punk-rockish score and an unabashedly sympathetic treatment of Borden, this show is far less about wallowing in the luridness of patricide and homicide than it is about self-empowerment and self-actualization. It's all riot grrrl and more than a little #metoo, and by turning Borden into a heroine and celebrating her vengeful exploits, *Lizzie* rises above its grisly story and becomes a provocative—and more than a little unsettling—re-imagining of a slice of bloody American folklore that's far more about the politics and culture of the 21st century than it is about life in the late 19th century.

At least that's the takeaway from this Chance Theater production, skillfully directed by Jocelyn A. Brown and featuring a rocking six-piece live band and four actresses who hurl themselves into the frenzied tale. Unlike the real Borden, reportedly a mild, unassuming 32-year-old Sunday school teacher, this Lizzie (played in riveting fashion by Monika Peña) seems younger and her motivations for a crime that she probably (although there are many other theories) committed far clearer.

Those motivations are, apparently, infused into the factual details of Borden's life, which were widely publicized by the newspapers of the day. In this retelling, sexual molestation by her wealthy but strange father and his disgust at her relationship with her closest female friend turns Lizzie into the kind of victim that contemporary audiences can surely find sympathetic. Her psychological scars are inflamed by her father's marriage to his second wife, who cuts Lizzie and her sister out of his will. So, she decides to cut back.


SHARPENING THE BLADE

DODI CATRIGER, TRUE IMAGE STUDIO

Up until this point, which ends Act I, the story, as edgy as it is with its coupling of psychosis and sexuality (the four actresses barely conceal the heels, garters and torn black lace beneath their otherwise-genteel clothing) is easy enough to follow. But Act 2 rushes along too quickly, and while we understand what led Borden to do this, it's impossible to figure out why she isn't found guilty.

Of course, the point isn't why Borden ultimately walked or whether she committed these heinous deeds. It's that at some point, a woman long dismissed, objectified and oppressed decides enough is enough—and acts.

That is borne out through the lyrics, the chunky three-chord progressions and punkish attitude of the score, and Hazel Clarke's fluid, sinewy choreography, all supporting the impressive work by the performers (including Alli Rose Schynert as Lizzie's sister, Jisel Soleil Ayon as her friend, and Nicole Gentile as Scottish maid Bridget). Though Lizzie's arms held the hatchet, all four of the women helped to sharpen the blade. These are no shrinking violets or demure girls whose cute smiles conceal their fangs. There is no posing among them, nor is there the sense they're merely reacting to the patriarchal, socio-economic conditions with which they've been saddled. They are actors, yes, but they're not just pretending. They've had enough, and they decide to act in real time to shake shit up. And even though only one commits the action that burns the house down, the other three stand in varying degrees of solidarity.

As does this entire production. Keyboardist and musical director Robyn Manion drives the band, set up at the back of the stage, in manic fashion, pumping her arms and gesturing widely. Twice, guitarist Jacob Gonzalez walks downstage, while the characters, Lizzie in particular, seem enchanted by him. And when the moment comes to take the #1 whacks, the tool Lizzie uses is an empty mic stand. It seems clear the show's creators are creating a wormhole of sorts, the music of the future serving as soundtrack to the passion and energy of these characters in the past. Who knows? Had Chrissie Hynde and Joan Jett lived in 1890s America, maybe women wouldn't have had to fight nearly 30 more years for the right to vote. They'd have been too busy butchering the asshole men.

LIZZIE THE MUSICAL
at the Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (888) 455-4212, www.chancetheater.com. Thurs., 7:30 p.m.; Fri., 8 p.m., Sat., 3 & 8 p.m.; Sun., 3 p.m. Through March 3. $35-$49.

ARTSOVERLOAD
» AIMEE MURILLO

Feb. 22-28

GOD HELP US! Ed Asner stars in this comedic play about a liberal and conservative pundit having their political views confronted by God. Fri., 7 p.m. Sat., 2 & 4 p.m. $25-$40. Robert S. Wentz Theatre at Newport Harbor High School, 600 Irvine Ave., Newport Beach; www.nhhsdrama.com.

JUNK IN THE TRUNK VINTAGE MARKET: More than 100 vintage, handmade and antique vendors offer rare and unique merchandise at this traveling trunk show. Sat.-Sun., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. $8-$25. Fairplex Pomona, 1101 W. McKinley Ave., Pomona. (909) 623-3111. junkinthetrunkvintagemarket.com.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FESTIVAL: A two-day celebration of African-American and African culture with live entertainment, storytelling, arts and crafts, and more. Sat.-Sun., noon-5 p.m. $26.95-$29.95; children younger than 3 and members, free. Aquarium of the Pacific, 1000 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 590-3100; aquariumofpacific.org.

THE GREAT MASTERS: GIOVANNI BELLINI: As part of the Beyond the Canvas lecture series, the life and times of the classical Venetian artist will be discussed, as well as his artistic influence. Wed., 7 p.m. Free. Newport Beach Public Library, 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach. (949) 717-3800; www.newportbeachlibrary.org.

MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE CO.: Founded by the legendary American choreographer, tonight's program features performances taking inspiration from modern women choreographers and women-centric themes. Wed., 8 p.m. $58-$150. Irvine Barclay, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine. (949) 852-4646. www.thebarclay.org.

BLUES IN THE NIGHT: A musical that honors some of the best American artists, from Bessie Smith to Duke Ellington. Wed.-Fri., 7:30 p.m., Sat., 2 & 7:30 p.m., Sun., 1 p.m. Through March 10. $75-$100. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach. (949) 497-2787. www.lagunaplayhouse.com.

"YEVGEMIYA MIKHAILIK: A SLOW CONFLICT": The locally based artist presents paintings, drawings and a mural installation that examines the physical forces that shape the earth, both manmade and natural. Open Thes.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Through April 14. Free. Grand Central Art Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana. (714) 567-7233. www.grandcentralartcenter.com.

"SINCERELY, NORMAN ROCKWELL": Newly acquired drawings by the American artist include some of his most famous works for *Saturday Evening Post* in the 1940s and '50s. Open Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Through Oct. 19. Free. Hilbert Museum, 167 N. Atchison St., Orange. (714) 516-5880; www.hilbertmuseum.com.

RIP, RockDaMullet

Ed Santos, social-media renaissance man and creative force behind Wahoo's, dies at 51

BY NATE JACKSON

This month, Orange County lost one of its unsung cultural heroes—a big-idea man, legendary goofball and beloved, behind-the-scenes architect that helped Wahoo's Fish Taco, Black Flys and Vans Warped Tour, among others, become household names Ed Santos, better known by his media persona RockDaMullet, died on Feb 13 in Indiana from complications with the flu and pneumonia after being in a medically induced coma for several days He was 51.

The Cerritos native spent years being a renaissance man in OC as an artist, marketing whiz and all-around creative whose trademark look—back-length mullet, tribal ear-plug piercings and black shades—made him an easily recognizable presence at Wahoo's events, festivals, concerts and especially in the world of MySpace, where he grew a massive following to match his outlandish hairdo

Santos worked with Wahoo's from the late 1990s until 2014, after which he helped to run United States of America Snowboard and Freeski Association before moving his family to Indiana to give his autistic daughter a quieter, more rural life

Santos' ability to identify with younger, more diverse customers around OC gave Wahoo's its edge in the fast-casual-dining world and appealed to the style and taste of a changing tide in local culture that would later be mimicked by countless other brands. It was food that appealed to surfers, athletes, business-suit types and punk rockers alike. "I started going to events with Wing [Lam, the Wahoo's founder who opened the chain's first restaurant in Costa Mesa in 1988], and I started to learn a lot more in the world of marketing, but [it was] more guerrilla marketing, not your standard, textbook marketing," Santos said in a video interview in 2013. "And through that teaching, I was able to develop networking relationships, and I was able to marry art with relation marketing and branding and networking and tying all that in together in the world of social media before there was even a name for it. I was somehow able to figure this mess out."

One of his first ideas for Wahoo's was inspired by a previous job, working in sticker production at Black Flys He used every wall of Lam's restaurants as canvases, slapping stickers that marketed action-sports brands on every available space, which helped to sell the Wahoo's brand to the people involved in those industries Inevitably, the restaurant chain would also appear at local action-sports events and concerts, becoming one of the first restaurants to double as a lifestyle brand.

Santos, an accomplished illustrator and graphic artist, was also responsible for creating the iconic "F" logo associated with Travis Barker's apparel company Famous Stars and Straps

As news of Santos' passing spread, the outpouring of support for him and his family on social media speaks to the lasting presence he had on OC culture, even though he hadn't been around for several years. The week before his death, Santos posted three times on Instagram about his failing health—the final post being the most concerning: "They asked if I had a living will and trust already Why the F would anyone be asking that? Keep 'em coming, prayer warriors Much [love] and social thanks to my wife, who's sat up all night to monitor my breathing. If this continues, they are looking at ICU by tonight."

A GoFundMe campaign set up by his younger brother Nelson detailed his rapidly declining health. "These unexpected severe conditions are rapidly deteriorating Ed's health. We're fearing for the worst, but excessively praying for a miracle," Nelson writes "Support from everyone who knows him personally, knew him from the past and following him on social media is needed more than I can ever hope for."

Unfortunately, Santos never recovered. He is survived by his wife, Missy; his daughter, Abede, and his son, Jared.

Among the local action-sports and event-production communities, Santos was a man ahead of his time.

John Hampton, founder of Hampton Productions, was a longtime friend and collaborator of Santos' when they both worked for Wahoo's; he helped with marketing Wahoo's at events such as the X Games, KROQ Almost Acoustic Christmas and a surprise blink-182 concert to celebrate the opening of a Wahoo's in Norco. "Ed and I were right next to each other at all the events," Hampton says. "We had an office inside Wahoo's from 2005 to 2015 We'd see each other every day We'd argue on a daily basis; it was really more like a brother relationship, and deep down, we would do anything for each other You give each other hell, but it's all with heart and good fun."

With Lam, Shant Keulian of Archie's Ice Cream and others, Hampton and Santos created RockDaMullet TV, a live-streaming show that would host episodes on the red carpet and backstage at big events and awards shows such as Teen Choice and X Games before anyone else was doing it. They'd also interview bands in the Archie's Ice Cream Truck, including such then-burgeoning locals as the Dirty Heads "We were helping a lot of Orange County up-and-coming bands back in the days," Hampton recalls "Between them playing the stores and different locations, it got them a lot of exposure, and Ed was always the face of it."

THE ORIGINAL OC INFLUENCER

COURTESY OF JOHN HAMPTON

Before the ubiquity of social-media influencers, Santos was at the top of the heap when it came to MySpace. For a long time, he and former reality-TV star Tila Tequila had two of the most-followed profiles in the world; Santos' was always somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 million. "It was a combination of the access and having a persona," Lam says.

As their working relationship and friendship grew, Lam and Santos made a high-profile pair. "When Eddie walked up [to events] with me, people didn't know what to do," the local restaurant impresario says. "Here you have these two Asian guys with the crazy hair, Eddie with the plugs in his ear, the lip ring people were like, 'Who is this guy? Is he a rock star?' They didn't know what to make of it. We played a part. Nobody ever questioned whether we could or we couldn't, and if you walk like you belong, that's half the battle, and if one celebrity there knew Eddie, it was easy to pull everything off—everything fell into place."

Though he's left the SoCal craziness, Santos' spirit and legend will always be part of the fabric of our local culture, as a figure whose brilliance won't soon be outshined.

"Today, everyone [freaks out] about big events like the Super Bowl on social media, but you weren't there, and if you were there, it was in the crowd with 100,000 people—that's nothing," Lam says. "Eddie was on the stage; he was in the game He was part of whatever was going on and broadcasting from that perspective"

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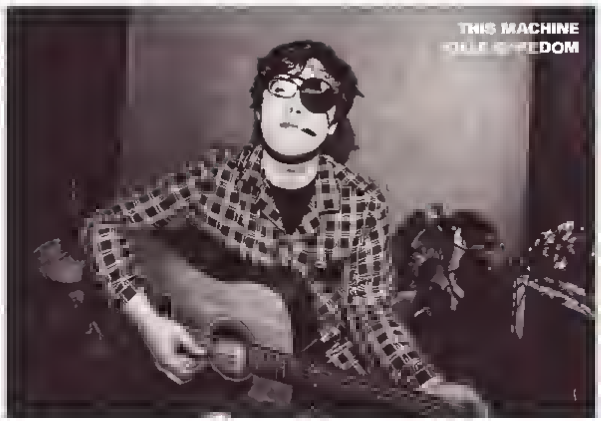

M HAIGHT

True Punk Troubadour

Daryl Blake finds his inner Guthrie on *Orange County Folk Songs Vol. 1*

BY STEVE DONOFRIO

Daryl Blake is no stranger to the Orange County music scene In 2013, he co-founded the Grinning Ghosts, who spread their snotty garage rock all over Southern California, releasing some tunes through Burger Records Though they recently returned from a hiatus, Blake, a true songwriter at heart, had been hard at work on his own project, the result of which, *Orange County Folk Songs Vol. 1*, was released in December 2018

"I just happened to be writing about Orange County stuff just because I was born in Anaheim and [I've] basically lived [here] my whole life," Blake says.

But his regional focus ended up driving the album into a folk direction. In addition to utilizing the sort of eclectic and often acoustic instrumentation that is often heard in folk songs, Blake's lyrics tell stories about his environment. "I feel like that's a part of the folk tradition that I'm drawing on," he says.

Though some may be quick to assume that the record was influenced by more modern folk-punk acts, Blake claims such classic artists as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan were his main source of inspiration. "Daniel Johnston's in there, too," he says

But the influence he draws from traditional folk doesn't just stop there. "Some songs specifically are sort of derived from older songs," he explains. "For instance, 'Hard Times in Orange County Town' is derived from 'Hard Times At the Mill,' and 'Orange County Sunshine Blues' is derived from 'Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues.'" Both of those works were based on even-older songs, so Blake is carrying on the folk tradition by putting his own spin on them.

His lyrics are perceptive, relevant and often delivered with a tongue-in-cheek attitude "There's a lot of Disney stuff in it," he explains, "just because that's a part of the miasma that I've been marinating in for most of my life My mom works at Disneyland; I have a weird love/hate relationship with it."

How could anyone write a folk album about OC and not mention the Magic Kingdom? The song that deals most directly with the Mouse House is "Devil on Main St., Orange County Fires of 2017"

"It's written from the perspective of Walt Disney's ghost," says Blake Written during and about the 2017 fires that covered the greater part of the county in a thick, orange layer of smoke and embers, it's through this Hellscape that Disney sees his creation for what it truly is.

Blake seems less cynical in his personal life It's through this persona that he can convey his criticisms and frustrations. "I think the character on the record comes across as much more apathetic and apprehensive about Orange County," he says. "I also have mixed feelings about Orange County, but I feel like I'm more positive about it than the speaker in the songs."

Though much of the credit should go to Blake as a great songwriter, he's adamant he couldn't have created the record without the musicians who played on it, including Luke Johnson, Gus Puga, Dan Fowler, Richie Belmondo, Josh Santallan, Buzz Gabrakirstos and OC music-scene fixture Michael Haight. "[Haight is] a big influence on me," Blake says, "probably on everything that I do"

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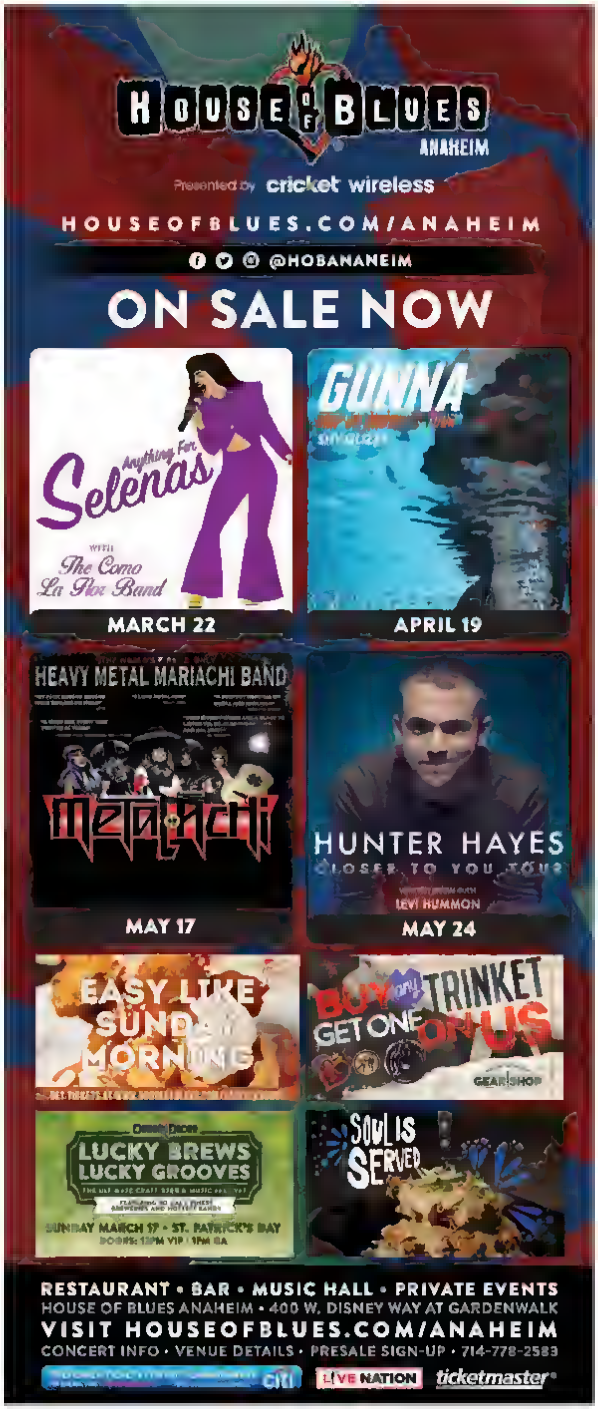

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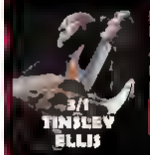

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4/14	ALBEBT LEE
4/19	AN EVENING WITH THE MUSICAL BOX
4/20	LD5 LDBDS
4/26	REVEREHO NORTON HEAT
4/27	AMBROSIA
4/28	KEIKD MATSUI
5/4	BEBLIH
5/10	RAUL MALO

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5/17	AN EVENING WITH COWBOY JUNKIES	5/31	YDUHG DUBLIHEBS
5/18	THE 5TH DIMEH5IOH	6/1	OESPEBADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
5/22	WILLIE K	8/7	A5IA FT. JOHN PAYNE
5/23	PUDDLES PITY PARTY	6/15	OSB
5/24	OIHGO BOINGO	6/22	CREED BRATTOH
5/25	FDBMER MEMBERS	7/13	LOS LOHELY BDYS
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MATT OBOM

Friday

BOB MARLEY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION, WITH ONE DROP REDEMPTION: 7 p.m., $15 all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

THE COATHANGERS, THE PARANOYDS; EARL GREY: 8 p.m., $15. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292. www.alexsbar.com

GREER, WALTER ETC.; PSYCHIC BARBER, ARCHER OH, GDOO SAN JUAN: 6 p.m., $13, all ages. Garden Amp (The Locker Room), 12762 Main St., Garden Grove. (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com

JFA, THE PEGS: 8 p.m., $15, 21+. The Karman Bar, 26022 Cape Dr., Ste. C, Laguna Niguel, (949) 582-5808; www.thekarmanbar.com

WALTER LURE'S LAMF (HEARTBREAKERS), FEATURING MICK ROSSI FROM SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS: 8 p.m., $15-$18. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarerem.com.

Saturday

BEASTIE BOYS/RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE TRIBUTE NIGHT: 6 p.m., $3, all ages. Garden Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove. (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com

CASH'O OUT, THE CINERAMAS: 8 p.m., $12-$15. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

LA SONORA DINAMITA: 9 p.m., $25, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-8005.

SAM VALOEZ, BOOES ROLLINS, KLEINAHEXA: 8 p.m., $8. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarerem.com.

THE SOUND OF ANIMALS FIGHTING, PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS, LORELEI K: 7 p.m. $37.50, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. www.observatoryoc.com.

Sunday

CALISAMBA: 1 p.m., $10. $15. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarerem.com.

LEFTOVER CRACK, DAYS N DAZE, FINAL CONFLICT, COPOUT, INTROSPECT: 7 p.m., $18, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

THE PATHOGENS, TENEMENT RATS, HARDSHIP ANCHORS, LAUNCHER: 8 p.m., $5, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

TROPA MAGICA: 9 p.m., $5, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-8005.

WALTER LURE'S LAMF, FEATURING MICK ROSSI (SLAUGHTER ANOTHE DOGS), CHEAP TISSUE, MANIAC, MONO OELUX: 2 p.m., $15, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

Monday

DAVID ROSALES & HIS BAND OF SCOUNDRELS, KILO BRAVO, GARDENERS LOGIC: 7:30 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarerem.com.

PHONY PPL: 9 p.m., $15. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-8005.

Wednesday

BLUES TRAVELER: 7 p.m., $21-$27, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

JJUUJJUU; JEFFERTITTI'S NILE; OIXIE, KUSTARO: 8 p.m., $10-$12. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292. www.alexsbar.com.

SOULFLY: 8 p.m., $20. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-8005.

Thursday, Feb. 28

ARISE ROOTS: 8 p.m., $10. 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-8005.

LIL MOSEY: 8 p.m., $22-$100, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

MOC, ELECTEO OFFICIALS, VERBAL ABUSE, SPIOER: 8 p.m., $15, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

MOM AND THE MAILMAN, TERMINAL A, TUNNELS, FLESH: 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarerem.com.

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Consider the (Extra) Lobster

SAVAGE LOVE
» DAN SAVAGE

Two weeks ago, a longtime reader challenged me to create a new sexual neologism. (Quickly for the pedants: You're right! It is redundant to describe a neologism as "new," since neologisms are by definition new: "**ne-o-l-o-gism** *noun* a newly coined word or expression." You got me!)

"Neo-Neologisms, Please!" wanted polite to point it out, but my two most famous and widely used neologisms have been around so long—pegging (2001) and santorum (2003)—that they're practically paleologisms at this point. So I accepted NNP's challenge and proposed "with extra lobster." My inspiration: on a visit to Iceland, I was delighted to discover that "with extra lobster" was a menu item at food carts that served lobster. This delighted me for two reasons: First, lobster is fucking delicious, and getting extra lobster with your lobster is fucking awesome. And second, "with extra lobster" sounded as if it were a dirty euphemism for something equally awesome. I offered up my own suggested definition—someone who sticks their tongue out and licks your balls while they're deep-throating your cock is giving you a blowjob with *extra lobster*—and invited readers to send in their own. It was my readers, after all, who came up with the winning definitions for pegging ("a woman fucking a man in the ass with a strap-on dildo") and santorum ("the frothy mix of lube and fecal matter that is sometimes the byproduct of anal sex").

What follows are the best reader-suggested definitions for "with extra lobster," with occasional commentary from yours truly.

"With extra lobster" sounds to me like going down on someone—regardless of sex—when it's a little more odoriferous than you would like because they haven't bathed in a while. For example: "Things were getting hot and heavy with my Tinder date last night, and then I started to go down and was surprised with extra lobster."

I think I have a good candidate for your "with extra lobster" definition! It could be applied to a woman who has an exceptionally large and dangling foreskin ("His penis comes with extra lobster!") or a woman whose labia protrudes ("I love pussy with extra lobster!").

When I first started dating my wife, she kept her lady parts waxed clean, and they looked a lot like a lobster claw, even being slightly red if the waxing was recent. We nicknamed her vagina and surrounding area "The Lobster," or "Lobby" for short. So I would suggest that "with extra lobster" should mean any time you get some extra lobster in on the act—from surreal lesbian sex (two lobsters) to a standard-issue male fantasy threesome (two lobsters and one cock) to a surprise second go-around after you thought the sex was over.

The area surrounding the vagina already has a name, the vulva. While most people are familiar with the labia majora and minora parts of the vulva, a.k.a. "the lips," fewer know the name for the area between the labia minora. The spot where the opening to the vaginal canal can be found—also part of the vulva—is called the "vaginal vestibule." According to my thesaurus, lobby is a synonym for vestibule. So this proposed definition of "with *extra* lobster" is pretty apt. Now some will quibble with the lobby-ish implication that a vagina is a space that needs to be entered. One can have a good time—great sex with lots of extra lobster—without anyone being penetrated, i.e., without anyone entering the lobby.

"Extra lobster should be the wave for those cock extension things. Example: "My husband has a small penis. And you know what? The sex is great! He gives great head and isn't afraid to strap-on some extra lobster now and then."

As a vegan, Dan, I strongly object to "with extra lobster." It reinforces the speciesist notion that it's permissible to consume lobsters, sentient life forms that feel pain, and associating a sex act with the violence of meat consumption further desensitizes us to acts of sexual violence.

Fuck off.

When you see a gorgeous ultra-femme creature for more gorgeously femme than my straight CIS sister will ever be. But under all the silks and stockings and extra panties ... there's a wonderful and welcome surprise! That girl comes WITH EXTRA LOBSTER!

I've learned about fursuits from you, Dan, and an many other crazy things—like the guy who wanted to be sexually ravished, and then torn apart and eaten by zombies. With that in mind, I think "with extra lobster" shouldn't refer to a sex act. It should be ENTIRELY literal: an act of bestiality performed with an extra lobster. Or with two or more lobsters. (The zombie guy was what hooked me on "Savage Love." I'm too shallow for the actual problems and stuff. Move freaks, please!)

Too literal and too improbable—and euphemisms that describe things that have never happened or only happen very, very rarely are unlikely to enter the lexicon.

I used to hook up with a cuckold couple with a particularly naughty fetish. I'd fuck the woman, fill her up, and her was would eat it out of her. So, say you hooked up with a woman, let's call her "Melania," and her husband, call him "Donald," ate her pussy after you filled her with come. Donald is eating pussy with extra lobster!

Sounds more like pussy with extra chowder to me—and what you've described already has a perfectly good (and widely used) name: *cream pie*. And, please God, let's leave Trump out of this. There's no need to associate something so vile and disgusting with eating another man's come out of your wife's lobby.

"With extra lobster" should refer to any intimate pleasure in which your expectations are greatly exceeded! I'm a gay man in his sixties, and my husband and I have been together for decades. I also have a friend with benefits. One night, we were camping, and I blurted out, "I would like to cuddle with you." What happened next was 12 courses—at least—with extra lobster! We've managed to rekindle this energy every couple of years ever the past 25!

I believe your example of "with extra lobster" regarding an extra WOW factor during something sexual is perfect and doesn't need extra explanation. As the saying goes, Dan, you pegged it!

I agree with the last two letter writers: "with extra lobster" shouldn't refer to any specific sex act—and it should *never* involve actual lobsters and/or mental images of the current president of the United States—but should, instead, be a general term meaning "expectations exceeded." When someone really comes through for you, when they knock your socks off, when they make you see stars—when they really WOW you—then you got boned or blown or fucked or flogged or torn apart and eaten by zombies *with extra lobster!*

And with that sorted and settled, a bonus neologism to close the column.

This isn't a definition for "with extra lobster," but I wanted to share it. I live in Uganda, and many of the streets are lined with stalls that sell barbecue chicken. If you know to ask for the special chicken, they'll often sell you weed. Special Chicken has become my favorite euphemism for weed!

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com), the ethics of HIV disclosure. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @FakeDanSavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

COURTESY OF NUG PREMIUM

TOKE OF THE WEEK

» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

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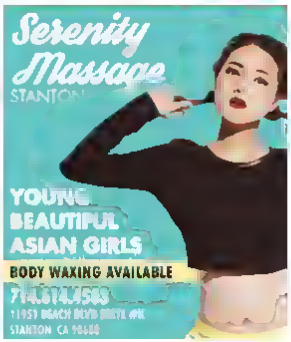
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The Legend of Sid Soffer

Minus its eccentric owner, the Blue Beet goes on and on and . . .

BY ALEXANDER HAMILTON CHERIN

If the old adage about everyone having their 15 minutes of fame rings anywhere near true, the legend of Sid Soffer and his Blue Beet bar is easily pushing a full hour and a half. The maverick restaurateur who owned and operated both Sid's Steakhouse and the more legendary Sid's Blue Beet bar in Newport Beach died in 2007. But stories of backroom poker games, second-to-none beef stroganoff, and epic battles against City Hall and its political establishment carry on to this day.

"Everyone knows the stories," quips a waitress, mid-pour, on a recent Friday afternoon at the Blue Beet. The bar is located on the first floor of a three-story structure that sits adjacent to the Newport Beach Pier and has been there, as advertised prominently on the outside of the building and imbued in local folklore, since 1912. "You can ask anyone, and they probably know of Sid."

The bar, which provided the backdrop for many of Sid's theatrics, was originally owned by Henry Stark during both "dry" and "wet" years in the early days of Newport Beach. More notably, at least for locals, it also purportedly served short stints as a brothel and the rumored home of a near-perpetual poker game in its infamous backroom. With that buildup, it seemed only natural that in the mid-1960s it was purchased by Soffer and became the centerpiece of his local empire.

The steakhouse, which Sid also owned and operated, was on Old Newport Road. Perhaps reflective of his "what you see is what you get" personality, the restaurant was legendary for refusing to serve condiments: no salt, no pepper, and certainly no ketchup. That particular culinary practice was also carried out at the Blue Beet, where Sid would allegedly season the food himself in the postage-stamp-sized kitchen.

But while the steakhouse was likely more lucrative during the 1960s to mid-1970s, Sid's emotional focus during that time was seemingly on the Blue Beet. By all accounts, the bar featured the holy triumvirate of any successful endeavor in Newport Beach: booze, good food and an unparalleled lineup of eclectic, live acts. Those who were frequent attendees at the time recall in social-media threads that in the same week, Steve Martin performed a standup set, Peter Tork of the Monkees delivered a solo performance and a flamenco guitarist known colloquially as "Jose Feliciano Perez" wooed the beach-going crowd. Throw in some Monday and Friday poetry readings, and you have the stuff of legends.

But as much as the bar was known for delivering the goods, it was Sid's skirmishes with City Hall that remain the Blue Beet's true legacy. From code violations to health-department shutdowns, Sid apparently fought City Hall at every step he could. Rumor has it Newport Beach's current three-minute rule, which limits the time a public speaker has during council meetings, is thanks to Sid, who rarely missed either Newport Beach or Costa Mesa City Council meetings—even those conducted on the same night.

But spats with local politicians over zoning issues or nuisance complaints is one thing. Bench warrants are serious business. And that, reportedly, is what was issued by a local judge when Sid failed to respond to one of many violations and subsequent notices to appear. Consistent with his reputation, Sid did what any local anti-establishment "man of the people" would do under similar circumstances: He moved to Las Vegas. And that's where he stayed until his death in 2007. Not to be completely outdone by the suits, however, Sid sold the Blue Beet bar upon his departure but retained ownership of the building. Conflicting reports cite leukemia and kidney failure as the exact cause of his death.

But what is uncontested is Sid's legacy. Not even fire could extinguish the story and one last cameo appearance before his death.

Just before 4 a.m. on April 18, 1986, the Blue Beet burned down. According to a *Los Angeles Times* article printed the day after, Sid came out of hiding in the high desert of Nevada to visit the remnants of the building whose reputation he had helped to shape. As noted in the article, he just stared at the ruins. "You don't have feelings after a while—this is my third fire," he said. "You'd go crazy if you fell apart every time something like this happens."

Sid then returned to Vegas, and the Blue Beet changed hands a few more times before it was purchased by father/son investors Steve and Scott Lewis, who once proudly posted a notice at the door that read, "Sid Ain't Here — Don't Ask."

Even though Sid is physically gone from this world, the Blue Beet remains a testament to his persona as a bit of a cultural outlier. Flanked by the allure of more college-friendly bars such as Baja Sharkeez, Blue Beet leverages its role as the only bar/restaurant in the immediate area to feature both music and dancing. "We get at least three or four people a day coming in here, asking if they can just look around — to remember," says John, a bartender at the Blue Beet with about a six-month tenure under his belt. "They will always tell me, 'I've been coming here since before you were born.'"

Joanne, a woman seated on the third-floor balcony enjoying the view with her husband and a glass of Chardonnay, is one such person. Although she now lives in Palm Desert, she felt obligated to come back for a visit. She remembers standing in long lines to get in, "even after they were shut down," she says. "The place was always just packed."

When asked about his favorite Sid story, John shyly responds he is "just part of the JV squad." "There are others who have been working here for 20 years that could tell you more," he adds.

But between his perfect pour and obvious respect for the history of the place, John will make the varsity team very soon. And I'm sure Sid would be very proud.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

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